

Program Performance Annual Report 2012

Statement of Needs

Needs of the Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice include adequate, stable, and flexible funding to improve and expand services; provide staff development, with positive work environments, positive images and public support. The Task Force requires assistance and support from many state and local partners to succeed. As a result of a review of the Task Force's existing strategic plan, the Task Force experienced leadership and membership additions. Working together, the Task Force expects significant improvements will be achieved.

Project Impacts and/or Progress

During the past year, the Task Force has met quarterly, reviewing and discussing activities to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation; cases involving suspected child maltreatment-related fatalities; and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and also ensures procedural fairness to the accused. The following are the activities completed for the 12 month period preceding the date of submission.

The Task Force was presented with information on child abuse and neglect data and policy revisions from the Children's Division at each meeting. The Missouri Children's Division, under its new leadership, embarked on a strategic visioning process. All outcomes of this process were shared with the Task Force. As a result of legislation, the Children's Division also convened a task force addressing the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive homes. The data from all of these efforts informed the work of the Task Force throughout the year.

The Task Force recommended in 2010 in-service training for reactive attachment disorder (RAD) be available for all foster parents. In response to this recommendation the Children's Division has provided the opportunity to the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Advisory Board to be involved in identifying beneficial and appropriate training. This board has worked with the Children's Division to identify a new process for approval of in-service training to include reactive attachment disorder and a wide variety of other pertinent topics. The Task Force as well as the Division acknowledges Foster/Adoptive parents can best identify their training needs in response to the youth they are parenting.

MOPS, or the Missouri Office of Prosecutorial Services, provided an update on their work to improve training for prosecutors in the areas of child abuse and neglect, particularly in rural areas of the state. They are seeking resources to hire staff for a new position of resource prosecutor who would work with local jurisdictions in cases of child abuse and neglect, with a goal of increasing successful prosecutions. A committee of the

Task Force agreed to work with MOPS to assess their recommendation and evaluate whether this would be an appropriate project for CJA funds. The subcommittee supported the concept but MOPS was unable to secure outside funding necessary to sustain the position.

Members of CJA are given a legislative update during meetings. Many members have become involved with the legislative process. Support was given to House Bill 1317, which specifies a person commits a crime of child abuse if he or she knowingly causes physical injury to a child resulting in abusive head trauma. The Task Force provided a letter to the sponsors. The bill is currently awaiting Senate review.

The Task Force engaged in a review of its own internal membership needs. A poll of the Task Force member's demographics, roles, skills and their areas of experience provided a road map for the engagement of other potential members with potential to provide substantial assistance in meeting the goals of the Task Force. A recruitment committee was formed and the efforts of this committee resulted in the creation of an enhanced Task Force first membership application form. Eleven professionals from across the state applied for the vacant positions, and six of those were invited to join the committee. New member orientation was held prior to their first meeting in March of 2012. The Task Force remains fully staffed currently; however, in an effort to be proactive, the membership application form has been posted on the Task Force's state website. Applications for membership will be accepted and maintained ongoing. Those interested may attend all open meetings in advance of selection to the Task Force.

Additionally, the chairs of the Task Force were termed out during this reporting period. The Task Force selected two active members to fill these leadership roles. These selections were confirmed by the Director of the Department of Social Services and approved by the Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court. The new co-chairs have engaged in an aggressive strategic planning process. Committees were restructured to reflect current needs. Standing committees include:

- *Finance*:
 - Duties include expense/budget monitoring and grant reviews. The goal of this committee is to develop additional guidelines for grant requests including more comprehensive evaluation and reporting from grantees.
- *Legislative/Policy*:
 - Duties include monitoring legislative actions and reviewing policy changes to develop recommendations. This committee has been charged with timely responses to needed actions to better engage with the legislative process.
- *Training*:
 - Duties include monitoring and improving access to training opportunities for child welfare parents, professionals and partners. This committee is closely monitoring the findings of the Task Force on Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Homes to improve the reduction of trauma to child victims of abuse.

The Children's Division Director provided critical information on the significant increase in the number of children coming into the foster care system in Missouri. She shared information on the effort to understand the issues leading to the increase. Casey Family Programs has been contracted to identify the factors contributing to this increase. The Task Force expects to make recommendations based on the findings within the next several months.

Funded CJA Grant Projects: 12 months prior to submission

Child Advocacy Centers

During FFY11, CJA grant money was provided to the Child Advocacy Centers in Missouri to improve the processes by which Missouri responds to cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse or exploitation. Forensic examinations, victim interviews, referrals to treatment providers, gathering and retention of forensic evidence used for criminal prosecution of the offender were made possible through funding provided by the CJA grant.

There are 16 Child Advocacy Centers located across the State, with some locations having satellite offices and serving children and families in the surrounding counties. The availability of these centers allows for a one-time interview of the victim as well as the opportunity for the physical examination to occur in the same location, preventing unnecessary stress and trauma to the child victim and their family. Child Advocacy Centers often facilitate scheduling the exams and interviews to further assist in the investigation and criminal prosecution process.

SAFE-CARE network providers (physicians and other medical providers who conduct forensic examinations) work in close collaboration with the Child Advocacy Centers. The mission statement of the SAFE-CARE Network continues to be “to improve outcomes for children who are victims of, or at risk for, child maltreatment by enhancing the skills and role of the medical provider in a multidisciplinary context.”

According to Department of Health and Senior Services in SFY11, Sexual Assault Forensic Examination-Child Abuse Resource and Education Network (SAFE-CARE) exams were conducted by 82 participating providers and a total of 1,902 exams were completed, compared to 2,076 exams in SFY10.

While data related to the successful prosecution of perpetrators involved in cases served by the Child Advocacy Centers is not available, it is well established that the forensic process provided by the Advocacy Centers, including the handling of evidence and quality of victim interviews, continues to improve the investigation and judicial handling (prosecution) process.

The majority of forensic interviewers who conduct the victim interviews use a model interviewing technique called “ChildFirst” (formerly known as Finding Words). By using this technique, the quality of the victim interview is raised to a standard prosecutors

consider helpful in the prompt and successful resolution of civil and particularly, the criminal court proceedings.

CJA support for the Child Advocacy Centers facilitated compliance with RSMo 210.001.1, which designates Child Advocacy Centers in Missouri.

Total \$ 560,495.75

Accidental and Inflicted Mechanisms of Injury in Childhood: Distribution of and Instruction on a Practice Improvement Tool for Investigators

In 2011 this project provided instructions in the format of a computer-based educational and practice tool detailing accidental and inflicted mechanisms of injury in children to Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division (CD). There were also eight face to face training sessions held across the state with 146 participants. One hundred copies of the Accidental and Inflicted Mechanisms of Injury in Childhood educational program have been distributed and the program is available on the Children's Division Intranet. Designed by pediatricians with expertise in child abuse and neglect, this advanced technology is easy to use and understand; 91.2% of those who responded in the follow up evaluation stated they felt the Accidental and Inflicted Mechanisms of Injury in Childhood program helped them communicate more effectively with medical providers, law enforcement or other members of the multi-disciplinary team.

Total \$10,000.00

The Child Center 7th Annual Prevention & Intervention Conference

The Child Center 7th Annual Prevention & Intervention Conference April 28-29, 2011. Goals of the conference were to improve the investigative, mental health and medical response, expertise and understanding of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation for multidisciplinary team members and professionals working with these targeted populations; 254 state-wide professionals attended the conference. Some of the topics presented included:

- Crime Victims Compensation
- Child Abuse Investigations: Roles, Responsibilities, and the Investigative Process
- Childhood Trauma and Its Effects on Relationships

Total \$5,000.00

Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Spring Conference Scholarships

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Spring Education Conference May 25-27, 2011. During this conference, financial assistance was provided for scholarships for 25 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse/juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients attended workshops related to child welfare. Goals of the conference were to provide techniques to working with challenging children

and youth, give awareness to disproportionate minority contacts and the understanding of childhood trauma, and juvenile sexual offenders for multidisciplinary team members and professionals working with these targeted populations. Programs presented included:

- Strength-based Practice
- Savvy Sisters
- School to Prison Pipeline
- Courtroom Skills

Total \$7,288.96

Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Fall Conference Scholarships

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Fall Education Conference October 26-28, 2011. Financial Assistance was provided for scholarships for 20 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse/juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients attended seminars consisting of over 12 hours of training related to child welfare. Goals of the conference were to provide techniques to strengthen management and supervision, explore youth development, inform professionals of youth aging out of foster care, coach mediation skills and provide up-to-date information on juvenile law for multidisciplinary team members and professionals. Programs presented included:

- Juvenile Law
- Family Finding
- Crossover Youth
- Teens and Technology

Total \$7,050.00

Missouri KidsFirst

Funding was provided to the Missouri Network of Child Advocacy Centers, d.b.a. *Missouri Kids First*, to provide scholarships for 40 participants to attend workshops on Forensic Interviewing and Child Abuse Investigative Team Training in July and August of 2011. The purpose of these trainings was to improve the ability of multidiscipline team members to investigate child sexual abuse cases. The following are just a few of the workshops offered:

- Effective Interviewing
- How Children Experience Sexual Abuse
- Process of Disclosure
- Culture and Forensic Interview

Meticulous records are maintained of everyone completing the Finding Words course in Missouri and all information is entered into an on-going data base. Pre-course readings are required and pre-tests are given to evaluate the knowledge of each person beginning the course. The final test must be passed successfully to receive a certificate of

successful completion. Every session is evaluated at the end of each presentation to gauge the quality of the presenter and the materials provided. Extensive composite data is compiled, aggregated and submitted to the National Center. Data is maintained on the location and professional affiliation of every person trained in the course. There were 100 participants across the state who attended this training.

Total \$ 8,550.00

Missouri Office of Prosecution Services

This agency is designated by state statute as an autonomous entity within the Attorney General's Office to provide training and technical assistance to Prosecutors and allied professionals. The purpose of their project was to educate and train their audience to improve the investigation, handling and prosecution surrounding child abuse cases, including sexual and physical abuse. *Emerging Concepts in the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse* training took place in October 2011 in five regional training locations and one webinar; 510 people were trained, 58 different counties were represented during the regional trainings. The following topics were covered:

- Behind the Net: Technology Facilitated Child Sexual
- The Signs & Symptoms of Coercive Control: The Co-Occurrence of Child Abuse, Animal Abuse & Family Violence
- Corroborating the Child's Statement
- Head and Neck Findings in Child Physical Abuse Investigations

Total \$ 6,652.99

Missouri KidsFirst

Missouri KidsFirst received funding in October and December 2011 to cover the cost of partial scholarships for 40 participants to attend an interactive intensive five day ChildFirst Forensic Interviewer Training or three-day Child Abuse Investigative Team training in Missouri. Missouri KidsFirst is contracted with the National Child Protection and Training Center to provide the training for multidisciplinary teams across Missouri. Teams included a combination of law enforcement, Children's Division investigators, prosecutors and juvenile court professionals. Goals of the conference were to improve the ability of multidisciplinary team members to investigate child sexual abuse cases. The following are just a few of the workshops that were offered:

- Child Development
- Corner House Forensic Interview Protocol
- Blocks and Problems; Testifying in Court; Suggestibility
- Anatomical Dolls

Total \$ 9,000.00

The Child Center 8th Annual Prevention & Intervention Conference

The Child Center 8th Annual Prevention & Intervention Conference: *Extending the Vision: Reaching Every Victim* project was held April 26-27, 2012. Goals of the conference were to improve the handling of the investigation, treatment and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation for multidisciplinary team members and professionals working with these targeted populations; 219 state-wide professionals attended the conference. Some of the presentations included:

- From Crime Scene to Courtroom: The Dynamics of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse Prosecution
- Understanding Child Sex Trafficking in the United States
- Mandated Reporting

Total \$15,639.00

The Missouri Bar and the Family Law Section of the Missouri Bar

Last year, the Missouri Supreme Court approved a revision of the Guardian ad Litem Standards and required all attorneys who serve as guardians be in compliance with these new standards. The Missouri Bar applied to the Task Force for funding to increase access to the mandated trainings, including multi-disciplinary partners such as CASA programs and other agencies involved in child abuse and neglect prosecution. The funding request lowered the cost of registration by \$20 for first-time attendees and by \$50 for continuing education for current guardians. Hardship applications were also expanded, to encourage lawyers, especially new members of the Bar, to become certified. The curriculum was developed in 2011 and the trainings are in progress as of March 2012.

Total \$6,718.53 (Partial funding out of the \$23,000 awarded.)

Proposed Activities:

In response to the charge to review critical cases, the Task Force will work this year to develop a process to review significant cases of child abuse and neglect. Modeling after guidelines used internally by the Children's Division Critical Event Review Team and the Missouri Office of the Child Advocate, a committee will formulate guidelines for this review process including case selection. The goal of this new effort is to provide a forum for discussion of issues and barriers to effective handling and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.

The Task Force will continue to monitor the outcomes of the Federal Child and Family Service Review, the Juvenile Court Improvement Project, the Children's Division Strategic Visioning outcomes, the Task Force on Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Homes, the Annual Report of the Office of the Child Advocate, and the

Annual Report of the Missouri Child Fatality Review Board. The Task Force will discuss and make recommendations for areas of improvement based on these reports and findings.

The Task Force will develop a calendar of multidisciplinary trainings available throughout the state. This information will be posted on the CJA website and updated quarterly.

The Task Force will monitor and respond as appropriate to issues of public concern related to child abuse/neglect, as brought before the Task Force by members or by the public. An issue recently was brought to the attention of the Task Force involving the lack of compliance with suggested immunizations, and Missouri School Districts inconsistent response to the issue.

The Task Force is revising the grant application process this year, and will make new policies and application guidelines available on the CJA website. The goal of the Task Force is to more effectively utilize available funding, to increase the scope of programs it provides, and to ensure desired outcomes are achieved.

The Task Force, in its ongoing effort to strengthen its own impact, will review and revise its bylaws in accordance with federal guidelines and Missouri state law.

Proposed CJA Grant Projects:

Task Force on Children's Justice Operating Expenses and Projects

Funding in the amount of \$10,000.00 is needed to support and maintain the activities, correspondence, teleconferences, quarterly meetings of the Task Force, and attendance for two persons to attend a CJA conference, in addition to funding grant project requests that may arise as appropriate.

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| Total | \$ 10,000 |
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Child Assessment Centers

Child Assessment Centers in Missouri are utilized for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse, in particular, child sexual abuse. The Children's Division currently funds Child Assessment Centers, of which a portion of the funding for the Child Assessment Centers comes from the CJA Grant.

The entire child population in Missouri has access to one of these centers, as they are available state-wide. The number of children served would be proportional to the number of children reported for child abuse and neglect, especially, sexual abuse. The children served are those children reported as a victim of child abuse, but primarily, child sexual abuse. Child Assessment Centers are one-stop shops, where child victims can be interviewed one time, while allowing observation by witnesses such as the Guardian Ad

Litem, Prosecuting Attorney, Law Enforcement and Children's Division Investigators, and recording of the interview for criminal prosecution. The Assessment Centers refer victims and their non-offending caregivers to additional supportive service providers needed, who can continue to address trauma issues for the child or family as necessary. The Centers contribute to the reform of the State child welfare system's handling of cases of child abuse and neglect by not only increasing the likelihood of effective prosecution by including multi-disciplinary team members and expert forensic interviewers in the investigation process, but by also further reducing trauma to the victim by a reduction in the number of interviews.

Total \$300,000*

(* Plus additional activities will be supported with carryover from prior year grants. Total projected expenditure for this activity will be \$320,000.)

The Missouri Bar and the Family Law Section of the Missouri Bar

Last year, the Missouri Supreme Court approved a revision of the Guardian ad Litem Standards and required that all attorneys who serve as guardians be in compliance with these new standards. The Missouri Bar applied to the Task Force for funding to increase access to the mandated trainings, which include multi-disciplinary partners such as CASA programs and other agencies involved in child abuse and neglect prosecution. The funding request lowered the cost of registration by \$20 for first-time attendees and by \$50 for continuing education for current guardians. Hardship applications were also expanded, to encourage lawyers, especially new members of the Bar, to become certified. The curriculum was developed in 2011 and the trainings are in progress as of March 2012 with continued training well into the fall of 2012.

Total \$16,281.47

Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Spring Conference Scholarships

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Spring Education Conference May 23-25, 2012. Financial Assistance has been provided for scholarships for 20 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse/juvenile justice. Professionals who work in the field of Juvenile Justice will be provided continuing education to improve their service delivery. The workshops will be evaluated and results will be shared in the final report given to CJA. Scholarship recipients will attend one of the following five workshops:

- When You are at a Loss for Servicing Your "Special Needs" Youth
- Effective Police Interactions with Youth
- Teen Dating Violence and Bullying
- Getting better...at Getting better
- Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse in Missouri

Total \$7,620.00

Missouri CASA Association

The Missouri CASA Association-*Fostering Futures* training will be a two day training held in late spring or early summer, 2012. Facilitators will provide training to volunteers for older foster youth making them be more effective advocates throughout the judicial process. There are currently 22 local programs with volunteers serving children in 23 of Missouri's 45 Judicial Circuits. Objectives of the *Fostering Futures* Training of Facilitators are as follows:

- To train at least 15 of the 22 local program facilitators to become trainers;
- To provide ten copies of the *Fostering Futures* curriculum to each of the 22 programs;
- To provide continued technical assistance to local programs regarding the *Fostering Futures* curriculum.

Total \$8,780.00

Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association

The Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association have been approved for the *ONE Conference: All Together Now* project. This conference is a statewide collaborative training that will unite all of Missouri's foster/adoptive and kinship parent groups and professionals who work with these groups to encourage the development of mutual understanding, networks for effective practice, and collaborative support opportunities. The conference will include eight sessions which are advocacy focused on the promotion of effective practice related to the investigative, administrative and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases, with a special focus on the reform of law and practice in these areas. Additional sessions will focus on innovative strategies and best practice related to reducing the trauma for child victims of these crimes. The conference is scheduled for June 14-16th; 200-350 participants are expected to attend with 137 receiving scholarships.

Total \$10,000.00